**Olivia McConney MYP4 Humanities 13 February 2011**

**Which were more serious for Germany – the economic consequences of Versailles, or the political consequences?**

Germany suffered both economic and political consequences because of the Treaty of Versailles. One economic consequence was that they lost 10% of their land. This land was very useful to Germany because it contained resources that they could use such as coal. 15% of the land was good for growing crops. Farmers suffered a lot from not being able to grow their crops on their own land because it was taken away. The land that Germany lost contained some of the most productive land, which they needed to pay of £6.6 billion of reparations. Germany also lost 75% of its iron ores resources which are rocks or minerals that iron can be taken out of. Another economic consequence that Germany faced was that they lost 12.5% of their population. This was a problem because these people would no longer be able to pay taxes or work. Men who were returning from war wanted their old jobs back but could not get them. Because of the war, Germany gained a weak economy. The French were demanding that the Germans pay the reparations which came to a total of £6,600 million. This put a huge burden on Germany because they needed to find a way to pay off the reparations. Since all this was taking place, Germany suffered from inflation, meaning that people now had to pay more for food, clothes, services etc since the money’s value had decreased. Germany paid of their first payment but by the second payment could not give the sum of money they owed. The French wanted the payment so they, along with the Belgian, went to Ruhr in Germany to take the reparations. Germans working in Ruhr went on strike because they did not want to pay the French anything and because of the strike Germany’s economy got worse. The French invading Ruhr caused hyperinflation. People were paid twice a day and had to be given half hour breaks so that they could spend the money, otherwise it would be useless. The German government let France and Belgium take coal as part of reparations because the strike going on would cause the economy to completely collapse. Seeing that Germany needed more time to pay reparations, they were given the course of 59 years to pay off everything. The United States of America lent Germany money to help pay as well in a plan known as the Dawes plan.

Germany suffered many political consequences as well as economic. Germans did not find the treaty fair. They believed that they were being disgraced because they had to carry the blame for the war. They thought that what was happening to the German army was taking away the ability for Germany to defend themselves. Germans were especially ungrateful to the actual signing of the treaty. Philipp Scheidemann stepped down from being the Head of Government in Germany because he refused to sign the treaty. The new government that came into place, known as the Weimar government or as many called them, the November Criminals, had to sign the treaty. Because they signed the treaty the people of Germany were no longer pleased with them. The Weimar government would have to deal with people not liking them because they signed the treaty. Many groups tried to get the new government out of power. A communist group known as the Spartacists tried to get the Weimar government out of power but were stopped by a group of ex- soldiers known as the Freikorps. The Freikorps decided to try a revolution. In Berlin they tried to overthrow the government but the people of Berlin went on strike, not wanting to see their government get thrown out. Later on the Nazi Group led by Adolf Hitler tried to take over Bavaria but did not succeed. Groups such as the Nazis got support from the people by promising to stop the treaty from being allowed and letting Germany regain its rightful spot in Europe. Another political consequence was that Germany was now resentful of other countries such as France and Belgium. Germany was angry with these countries because they were the ones who had enforced the treaty upon them.

I believe that the economical consequences were more serious. Since the German government signed the treaty it caused a number of problems in the German economy. Inflations occurred and when the Invasion of the Ruhr happened it caused hyperinflation. I do think that the economic consequences were connected to the political consequences though. The political consequences were serious because it caused the Germans to be mistrusting of their government and of other countries. It caused the Germans to gain hatred for countries that had enforced the Treaty of the Versailles because that was the reason people had lost jobs and that Germany had lost its pride as a nation.